

Testimony of Justin Schechter, M.D.
Psychiatric Security Review Board
Before the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee
April 6, 2010

Good afternoon, Senator Looney, Representative Janowski and distinguished members of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee. I am Justin Schechter, M.D., and I am honored to appear before you today as Governor Rell's nominee for re-appointment to the Psychiatric Security Review Board as the Psychiatrist member.

As my resume before you indicates, I am an Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the Law and Psychiatry Division of Yale University. I am a member of the Medical Executive Committee of the Stamford Hospital and have served as Chair of the Hospital Ethics Committee for the last fourteen years. In addition, I have maintained a private practice since 1986. My familiarity with the seriously mentally ill population comes from my past work as Director of the Acute Treatment Unit at the Connecticut Mental Health Center and as Director of Outpatient Psychiatric Services at Stamford Hospital.

As the committee members are aware, the Psychiatric Security Review Board has jurisdiction over those individuals found not guilty of a crime by reason of mental disease or defect. My experience with Yale University's Law and Psychiatry Division has been particularly beneficial in appreciating the nexus between mental health and the law. I have supervised the forensic fellows working in all aspects of legal psychiatry, including risk assessments.

I have served on the Board since September 2006 and have been impressed with the careful and dedicated work of the group. While the public service commitment is significant in terms of time spent in hearings and digesting clinical information in preparation for those hearings, it is a commitment consistent with my values of public service. I am very conscious of the Board's mandate for the protection of society, and I appreciate the gravity and commitment that a Board appointment entails. I am eager to apply my experience and skills to the task.

I would be happy to answer any questions that the committee may have at this time concerning my nomination to the Psychiatric Security Review Board.